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Presentation
FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Interactive and Dialogic Reading in Preschool

June 2007

Topic: Preschool Language and Literacy

Practice: Use Interactive and Dialogic Reading

Highlights

- Illustration of how interactive and dialogic reading differs from the teacher reading a book to the class
- Research base for dialogic reading
- Basic elements of interactive and dialogic reading
- Illustration of interactive reading before, during, and after reading a storybook.
- Types of questions and comments for prompting child as storyteller
- Supports for teachers: modeling, practice, reflection

Full Transcript

Slide #1

Welcome to the overview on the use of interactive and dialogic reading in preschool

Slide #2

Here are a few tips before we get started…

Use the slide titles in the ”outline” to jump to a specific section.

Click on the "script” tab to follow along with the narration.

Use the controls at the bottom to easily stop and start the presentation.

Download any related files in the "attachments” folder. And show or hide the navigation using the windows icon.

Slide #3:

Walk into any preschool classroom and you will see teachers reading stories to children.

Though the untrained eye may not spot it—when it comes to building good literacy skills, there often is a world of difference between one reading session and another.

Slide #4:

Here’s Mrs. Eliot reading a book during circle time.

She holds the book on her lap and starts to read, but doesn’t get very far because the children are talking to each other and squirming.

She soon stops reading and asks the children to go to "choice” time and draw a picture.

Slide #5:

On the other hand, here’s Mr. Madison’s class.

He, too, is reading aloud, but he spends much more time showing-off the colorful illustrations.

He's also asking questions about the book, like:

- What's happening in this picture?
- Who do you think will get on the bus next?
- Why do you think the bus gets happier when more people get on?

There's lots of chatter as children are eager to answer his questions.

Slide #6:

What's the difference between these two story sessions?

Mrs. E is focusing on the narrative alone, and expects her children to sit quietly and pay attention.

Mr. M, however, is engaging his class in interactive and dialogic reading—techniques which invite his students to be active participants as they also develop early literacy skills.

Slide #7:

Research has shown a connection between the oral language skills of preschoolers and later reading proficiency.

Interactive and dialogic reading are ideal methods for developing those oral language and vocabulary skills through daily storybook reading that all children enjoy.

Slide #8:

These techniques can be especially important for children from low-income families.

Such children may lack access to books, have only limited conversations with adults, or have very few stories read to them at home—all factors that can affect acquisition of early literacy skills.

Slide #9:

The core idea is to engage children in a story by having them reflect on the narrative and how it portrays the world.

As they do, children learn to connect the story's text to the ideas and images the story portrays.

Slide #10:

During interactive reading, an adult reader uses a variety of techniques to engage a child or group of children in the text.

Slide #11:

The reader might ask children to:

- point to the title, point to the words and pictures in the story;
- make predictions about what might happen in the book based on the cover or story so far; or
- retell the story in their own words.

Slide #12:

Interactive strategies get children talking and engaged in the story.

Follow-up questions encourage students to expand their responses and express their ideas.

Slide #13:

Interactive reading techniques include:

- probing for responses,
- providing information, such as the meaning of important words, that help expand student understanding and engagement,
- commenting on what children have said to reinforce their confidence and acknowledge their participation, and
- modeling how to share ideas during a story discussion.

All of these techniques are helpful ways of engaging children and getting them to connect the story to the text, and to their own experiences.

Slide #14:

It's a good idea to use interactive reading techniques before, during and after the story to help children build key literacy skills.

Slide #15:

Let' s take the example of teaching a popular story such as *The Fish*:
Before reading the book, the teacher asks children to point to the title and make predictions about what might happen.

This helps children anticipate what's to come, and establish a personal incentive to see what happens—to see if their predictions come to pass.

Slide #16:

During book reading, the teacher gives explanations, prompts comments, and poses questions to gauge how well students are following and understanding the story.

The teacher might ask, "What could Fish do to make friends?"

Slide #17:

As students share their ideas, the teacher could turn their attention back to the story to show how Fish tries to solve the problem. As she does, the teacher can also build print awareness by tracking her finger to show that text is read from top to bottom and left to right.

Slide #18:

After reading the book, the teacher will discuss it with the children, often drawing connections between events in the story and their everyday lives.

For example, she might ask, "How did Fish feel about losing his scales? Have you lost something you loved? How did you feel?"

Slide #19:

This final level of reflection helps children see reading as a gateway to understanding their own world, helping them establish a personal connection to literacy.

Slide #20:

Interactive reading can be a powerful tool for helping young children get an early start on literacy skills.

Research has shown that a similar approach, known as dialogic reading, is especially effective at improving oral language development for young learners.

Slide #21:

The main feature that distinguishes dialogic reading from other book reading techniques is the role reversal for teachers and students.

Slide #22:

In dialogic reading, the child learns to become the storyteller with the assistance of the adult, who functions as an active listener and questioner.

Slide #23:

Initially, the teacher begins by assessing the child's vocabulary by asking two kinds of questions, completion questions and "W-h" questions—the who, what where when and why questions.

Slide #24:

Completion questions ask children to complete a sentence by filling in the missing word:

For example, a teacher might ask: "In the picture, it looks like the cat is hiding from the BLANK."

Slide #25:

"W-h" questions ask students to reflect on key features of the story.

For example, while pointing to a picture in the book of a dog digging a hole, the teacher could ask: "What is the dog doing? Why do you think he's doing it?"

Slide #26:

As the child becomes more familiar with the book, the teacher can increase the child's literacy skills by introducing new language, through modeling, and by questions that connect to a child's experience.

Slide #27:

Teachers can increase a child's level of language by posing questions that encourage children to use words not used in the book, or by using vocabulary that stretches their current understanding.

Slide #28:

Teachers can also model the dialogic process through use of open-ended questions and expansions.

For example, while looking at a page in a book that the child knows, the teacher could say: "Tell me what is happening in this picture."

If the child responds simply by saying, "it's about a truck," the teacher could expand the child's response by saying: Yes, it's about a truck. It's a red fire truck.

Slide #29:

The teacher then moves on to asking questions, which require the child to relate concepts within the book or between the book and real life—sometimes called distancing questions.

While looking at a book with a picture of animals on a farm, the teacher might say: "Remember when we went to the animal park last week. Which of these animals did we see there?"

As the child becomes increasingly familiar with a book, the adult reads less, listens more, and gradually uses higher level prompts to encourage the child to go beyond naming objects in the pictures to thinking more about what is happening in the pictures and how this relates to the child's own experiences.

Slide #30:

Teachers need different levels of support to use interactive and dialogic reading techniques effectively.

Slide #31:

Some teachers are "naturals" who take to these methods readily; others will need lots of preparation and practice. Most teachers need support to better understand how to use dialogic reading prompts that help students take an active role in the story telling process.

Slide #32:

Reading specialists and coaches who teach these techniques to teachers often use modeling, practice, and reflection to help teachers get comfortable with interactive and dialogic reading.

Slide #33:

Modeling involves demonstrations of each reading technique, with teachers watching what happens from the sidelines.

It is useful for teachers to both see what the coach does, as well as how her students react, to begin to see the value of Interactive Reading at engaging students in oral literacy.

Slide #34:

Once teachers have seen how these techniques work, they need time to practice them with children while a coach or mentor teacher observes.

Slide #35:

Lastly, teachers need to have an opportunity to reflect on what's working and areas that need improvement, an important step to reinforcing interactive and dialogic reading skills.

Slide #36:

All children enjoy listening to stories.

But those children who are actively engaged in the narrative are doing more than listening—they are learning key literacy skills essential to future success in reading.

Slide #37:

To learn more about interactive and dialogic reading, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.